

WM. B. DRAPER—LEGAL REPRESENTATIVES OF.

[To accompany Bill H. R. No. 438.]

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MARCH 23, 1860.

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Mr. POTTLE, from the Committee on Naval Affairs, made the following

REPORT.

*The Committee on Naval Affairs, to whom was referred the memorial of W. T. Smithson, administrator of William B. Draper, deceased, have had the same under consideration, and report as follows:*

It appears by the papers in this case that William B. Draper, of Milwaukee, Wisconsin, being an expert in magnetic telegraphing, and a builder of telegraphic lines, was induced by Commodore M. C. Perry to accompany him in his Japan expedition, and to take charge of the telegraph sent out by this government to the Japanese government.

As Congress had failed to pass a law authorizing the formation of a scientific corps to accompany said expedition, Mr. Draper shipped as master's mate, the pay of which was only twenty-five dollars per month, being induced thereto, as he alleges, by the assurance of Commodore Perry that Congress would not fail to grant him such compensation as his services as a member of the scientific corps accompanying said expedition would fairly entitle him to. During the expedition Mr. Draper had the entire charge of the telegraphing apparatus, and while at Lew Chew, China, and Japan, constructed lines, and gave illustrations of the art, transmitting communications in English, Dutch, and Japanese languages.

That Mr. Draper ably conducted this branch of the scientific illustrations which were given to these governments by this expedition there is no doubt, and the importance of his services in this department are matters of history. (See notes 1 and 2.)

It appears that during the voyage, while not engaged in his scientific experiments, Mr. Draper performed the duties of master's mate.

It further appears by the papers that, while in this city asking Congress to render him simple justice in the payment of services rendered the government, and which had proved so important, Mr. Draper died in this city, under circumstances of such pecuniary

embarrassment, that it will be necessary for Congress to make compensation for his services before his just debts can be paid.

Your committee are of the opinion that the pay received by Mr. Draper, as master's mate, was entirely inadequate compensation for the important services which he rendered during the Japanese expedition; and they report a bill for his relief, granting to his legal representatives fifteen hundred dollars per annum during the time he was employed in said expedition, deducting therefrom the pay which he has already received as master's mate, with a recommendation that said bill do pass.

NOTE 1.—Bayard Taylor, in his work on India, China, and Japan, (library of Congress,) page 450, says, when speaking of Lew Chew: "During our visit the commodore applied to the authorities to lease a house on shore for a short time that the daguerreotype and telegraphic apparatus might be put up and tested. They designated a little temple near the village of Tumai, two miles north of Napa. \* \* \* \* \* Mr. Draper went ashore with his assistants, and remained three weeks; were daily visited by members of the better class of natives, who watched the operation with the greatest curiosity.

"The telegraph apparatus worked admirably, and though the natives could only partially comprehend its character, they regarded it with a kind of superstitious awe," &c.

NOTE 2.—At page 450, vol. 1, of History of Japan Expedition, Commodore Perry speaks of Mr. Draper and his services, and gives an illustration of the line and its operation.

NOTE 3.—Nearly all of those engaged in the scientific experiments in this expedition have had bills passed for their relief by Congress.